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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

COMMITTEES:

BUDGET

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

FINANCE

SMALL BUSINESS

November 1, 2001

CSB
merged
01-348

Michael Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W. - Room 8B201
Washington, DC 20554

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JAN 17 2002

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Chairman Powell:

I am writing in response to the proposed merger between the DirecTV and EchoStar (Dish Network) direct broadcast satellite (DBS) services.

I understand that this merger proposal will be reviewed by both the Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division. While I defer to your jurisdiction in reviewing the approval of this merger, I believe it is imperative that the Commission keep in mind the unique concerns of rural satellite subscribers when arriving at any final conclusion in the matter.

As you are well aware, in many rural areas, satellite television is the only method by which persons can receive quality television services. Many of these areas do not have access to the traditional cable infrastructure. While the EchoStar and DirecTV merger may very well provide a strong competition to the cable industry in areas where consumers have the *choice* between satellite and cable service, it is imperative that whatever agreement reached provides protections for those satellite subscribers who *do not* have access to cable and/or receive inadequate over-the-air network broadcast signals.

As the FCC reviews this merger, I would appreciate your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Olympia J. Snowe
OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator

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